

Bush vows no politics

By Arthur Siddon

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WASHINGTON—George Bush, attempting to head off objections to his nomination as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, pledged Monday to take himself out of politics and not to seek the Republican vice presidential nomination.

However, Bush would not pledge to refuse the candidacy if it offered by President Ford.

The former chairman of the Republican National Committee made the promise as the Senate Armed Services Committee opened confirmation hearings into his appointment.

ACTING BEFORE senators could question him about his political background, Bush read an eight-page statement to the committee in which he said he would take no part "directly or indirectly in any partisan political activity of any kind" if appointed to the CIA.

Bush had come under fire from Sen. Frank Church (D., Idaho), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, who claimed the CIA post was too sensitive to be held by a former party chairman.

"Yes, I have been in politics. I have no apology for either service [as party chairman and as congressman]," Bush said.

HIS ABILITY to shut off politics has been demonstrated when he was United Nations ambassador and when he was chief of the U.S. liaison office in China, he contended.

As far as the vice presidential nomination is concerned — Ford has indicated Bush might be his running mate — Bush said he would not seek the nomination but would not pledge to refuse it if offered.

"I cannot in all honesty tell you, sir, that I would not accept," Bush said. "I don't think any American should be asked to say he would not accept. . . . I can tell you that I will not seek any office while I hold the job as CIA director. I will put politics totally out of my sphere of activities."

BUSH'S STATEMENT appeared to satisfy most senators on the committee.

However, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D., Vt.) said that at this time, the appointment of a political person would be a mistake. Even the appearance of the agency acting out of political considerations could cause the CIA great harm, he said.

Sen. Gary Hart (D., Colo.) also indicated he was not completely satisfied with Bush's statement, and asked him whether he would rule out CIA involvement in attempts to overthrow foreign governments.

"I can't tell you that there would never be any support for a coup d'etat," Bush responded.

Hart then asked in reference to the overthrow of Chilean President

Salvador Allende, "What if it is a constitutionally elected government?"

"I THINK WE should tread very, very carefully on governments that are constitutionally elected," Bush said. "After all, that's what we're trying to promote around the world."

Bush promised to establish high ethical standards for the agency and to limit its intelligence function to foreign activities.

He said he found the revelations of CIA wrongdoing "outrageous and morally offensive," but repeatedly denounced former CIA agents who disclosed classified information — including the names of other CIA agents. Such disclosures endanger the agents and their families, Bush asserted.